

DO AQUATIC AND TERRESTRIAL BIRDS MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY?

Gaspar Tavira (1,3), Ronald Hernandez (1,3), and Francisco Cervantes (2,3)

1). Watsonville High School, Watsonville, CA

2). Pajaro Valley High School Watsonville CA

3). WATCH (Watsonville Area Teens Conserving Habitats) Program, Monterey Bay Aquarium

Introduction

This school year our group observed aquatic and terrestrial birds at Elkhorn Slough. Our project focused on the differences in behavior between aquatic and terrestrial birds. We observed bathing, resting and foraging. We think having a large place for both terrestrial and aquatic birds is rare. This is just one of the reasons to take care of the Elkhorn Slough. There are almost no other places like Elkhorn Slough in this area. We studied behavior in water and on land. We looked at their behaviors and wrote them down in our field note book. The first thing we did before going out to the field site was find out where we should do our first observations in the land or water. After we found out which area was best to go to first, we spent some time searching for the specific bird that we wanted to study. We observed many birds that stopped at Elkhorn Slough because it was a beautiful place for them to stay. No one bothered them at Elkhorn Slough it is a nice, quiet peaceful place for birds to rest, bathe, and forage. We hypothesized that land birds, spend most of their time resting, while water birds spent most of their time bathing.



Observation of birds resting at Elkhorn Slough.



Observation of birds foraging and resting at the bridge.



Map of Elkhorn Slough.

Materials and Methods

The materials that were used on our six day field sites

- Binoculars
- Bird ID book
- Nokia cameras
- Timer
- Note pad

We observed both land and water birds at Elkhorn Slough. We spent six field days (3 hours per day) collecting data. When we spotted a bird we observed it for no more than three minutes. Starting off our first piece of data we wrote down whether it was a water or land bird. We then identified the bird to the best of our ability. During the three minutes we timed how long it was resting, feeding or bathing. We observed a total of 10 land birds and 11 water birds.

Results

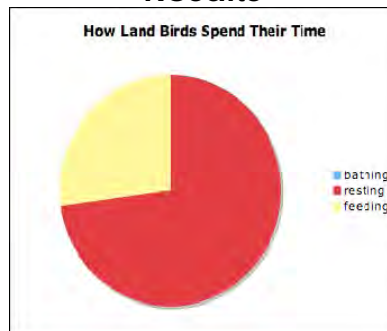


Figure 1. Land birds spend most of their time resting, less time feeding and no time bathing.

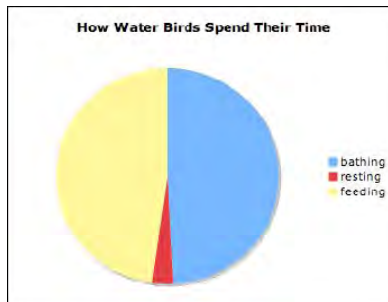


Figure 2. Water birds spend most of their time bathing, feeding, and little time resting.

Conclusion

Our research has shown how land birds and water birds behave differently. We found there was a difference in the amount of time they spent doing their bathing, resting, and foraging. Most water birds do their bathing in water, resting on land, and do their foraging through the mud to look for food. Land birds do their bathing (cleaning) on dirt, they rest in trees or in land, and forage on dirt or within grasses. We found out that water birds spend most of their time bathing (49% of their time). We found out that land birds spend most of their time resting which is (72% of their time).

Our group is very interested in learning about birds in the slough behavior and their habitats. We are also trying to prove to our community that the slough can be somewhere that should be taken care of. One simple way to take care of our aquatic and terrestrial birds is to start by taking more care of the community as much as the environment. People think that birds are not important they just know that they fly and eat like any other animal. There are people that do care about them, and come from all over the world to see the birds at Elkhorn Slough. Elkhorn slough is a rich land where many birds can be found. Our community gets benefits as well since it makes some money from the people that come and visit the Elkhorn Slough.

Literature Cited

Elkhorn Slough Website. Elkhorn Slough Foundation and Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Resources Agency California Department of Fish and Game. Web. 18 Feb 2011.

Silberstein, Mark and Eileen, Campbell Elkhorn Slough Monterey, CA: Monterey Bay Aquarium foundation 1989 print

Acknowledgements

Our group wants to thank the WATCH program and the following people; Amy Gunzelmann and Adam Yoshida (MBA), Satina Ciandro (WHS), Nina Arnberg and Greg Gilbert (UCSC = SCWIBLES), and the staff from the Monterey Aquarium. We really thank them for all their help and the support to our group.



Observation of birds foraging during low tide.